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FORWARD INTO BATTLE
The Concept of Courage in Military Contexts

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<p>This thesis explores various dimensions of the concept of courage, particularly in military contexts. It examines common elements, which characterize courage in general, and distinguishing features, which are unique to courage in military situations. Additionally, it examines the relationship between courage and the military ethos. In doing so, it utilizes a number of approaches including linguistic study, historical interpretation, and philosophical analysis. It considers courage through the examples, synonyms, and definitions; as well as through the works of various philosophers, ranging from Plato to Douglas Walton. A major finding of this thesis is that courage, being something both unusual and inconsistent, has a special status among virtues. It appears to be an autonomous virtue, at least in regards to the military, and as such, it shapes the military ethos in a distinctive manner. <i>Keywords:</i></p>					
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The Concept of Courage in Military Contexts

By

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B.A., California State University, Stanislaus, 1978
M.A., Boston University, 1983

Adviser: Dr. Nicholas Fotion

A Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School
of Emory University in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
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War is the realm of danger; therefore courage
is the soldier's first requirement.

-- Carl Von Clausewitz, ON WAR

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This thesis explores various dimensions of the concept of courage, particularly in military contexts. It examines common elements, which characterize courage in general, and distinguishing features, which are unique to courage in military situations. Additionally, it examines the relationship between courage and the military ethos.

In doing so, it utilizes a number of approaches including linguistic study, historical interpretation, and philosophical analysis. It considers courage through examples, synonyms, and definitions; as well as through the works of various philosophers, ranging from Plato to Douglas Walton.

A major finding of this thesis is that courage,

being something both unusual and inconsistent, has a special status among virtues. It appears to be an autonomous virtue, at least in regards to the military. And as such, it shapes the military ethos in a distinctive manner.

INTRODUCTION
COURAGE AND THE MILITARY ETHOS

Many different terms have been used in attempts to define the moral nature or character of the military. Terms like the "military way", "the military ethic", and "military virtues" have been used by an assortment of authors including Alfred Vagts, Samuel Huntington, and General Sir John Hackett.¹ All of these terms are somewhat limited in their breadth and, therefore, unable to express adequately the concept we are seeking to explicate.

When our own terms prove inadequate to the task, we can occasionally find the correct term in another language or culture. This appears to be the case in discussing the moral nature of the military. I suggest the ancient Greeks had a more appropriate term, the term *ethos*.

Ethos is generally defined as character, but it

means much more than that. It means a particular way of living one's life. It also means one's moral motivation or purpose. The term *ethos* encompasses the character, tone, disposition, sentiments, and values of a particular person, community, or people.²

We can think of several examples of groups who have a different *ethos*. There is the clergy, a body of people ordained for religious work, including monks, priests, and rabbis. There is also the medical profession, a group of highly trained physicians, nurses, and technicians, responsible for public health care. And, finally, our police forces, such as patrolmen and state troopers, who are accountable for maintaining public peace and safety.

Each of these groups is distinctly recognizable, is specially recruited and educated, and has a publicly accepted area of expertise and responsibility.³ They may have unique clothing or uniforms, living arrangements, and working conditions. In many ways they are set apart from the rest of society.

One of the things which serves to separate these groups from society is their disparate code of values. The clergy's code may be marked by the virtues of faith, hope, and charity while the physician's code may stress compassion, competence, and confidentiality. A police

officer's moral code, on the other hand, may emphasize bravery, confidence, and duty.

From such a comparison, it is easy to see how the term ethos is suitable for the military. The military is distinguishable in public by uniforms, posture, and bearing. A specific recruiting process and training regimen is used to transform individuals into members of the group. The military is the only public group allowed to use arms and armaments to further national interests of society.⁴

Further, the moral motivation or purpose of the military is unique in society. This moral purpose is articulated in various military codes or standards. Particular virtues, such as discipline, duty, and honor, are found in such codes.

The one traditional virtue, which has been especially associated with the moral nature of the military, is courage. The word itself conjures up images of triumphant cavalry charges, fierce hand-to-hand combat, and heroic assaults on enemy beaches. But beyond the images, when we turn our efforts to defining courage we encounter difficulty. What do we mean by courage? What are the elements of courage? Is courage objective or subjective? Does courage apply to acts or dispositions?

Furthermore, we have difficulty explaining the extent to which courage is a virtue to the military. Is it a supreme or cardinal virtue? And if so, why is it? Can we teach or train soldiers to be courageous? Some recent writers have even suggested that courage is an outdated virtue for the military.⁵

In this thesis, I propose to examine many of these issues under the broad rubric: What is courage? Such an examination will not only suggest answers to these various issues but will also reveal further insight into what I've called the military ethos.

CHAPTER I

WHAT IS COURAGE?

What is courage? Perhaps one way to find an answer to this question is to examine some examples of courage. One source of recognized examples is the citations of selected military awards, like the Silver Star, the Distinguished Service Cross, and the Congressional Medal of Honor. Let us look at three recent Medal of Honor citations.

Cam Lo, Republic of Vietnam, February 28, 1967
"... As the firefight continued several of the men were wounded by the deadly enemy assault. Suddenly, an enemy grenade landed in the midst of the marines and rolled alongside Pfc. Anderson's head. Unhesitatingly, and with complete disregard for his personal safety, he reached out, grasped the grenade, pulled to his chest, and curled around it as it went off ...".6

Kontum Province, Republic of Vietnam, April 1, 1970 "...The allied defenders suffered a number of casualties as a result of an intense, devastating attack launched by the enemy from well-concealed positions surrounding the camp. Sgt. Beikirch, with

complete disregard for his personal safety, moved unhesitatingly through the withering enemy fire to his fallen comrades, applied first aid to their wounds and assisted them to the medical aid station. When informed that a seriously injured American officer was lying in an exposed position, Sgt. Beikirch ran immediately through the hail of fire. Although he was seriously wounded by fragments from an exploding enemy mortar shell, Sgt. Beikirch carried the officer to a medical aid station. Ignoring his own serious injuries, Sgt. Beikirch left the relative safety of the medical bunker to search for and evacuate other men who had been injured. He was again wounded as he dragged a critically injured Vietnamese soldier to the medical bunker while simultaneously applying mouth-to-mouth resuscitation to sustain his life. Sgt. Beikirch again refused treatment and continued his search for casualties until he collapsed ...".7

Hiep Duc Valley, Republic of Vietnam, November 20, 1968 "...Immediately, Cpl. Crescenz left the relative safety of his own position, seized a nearby machinegun <sic> and, with complete disregard for his safety, charged 100 meters up a slope toward the enemy bunkers which he effectively silenced, killing the 2 occupants of each. Undaunted by the withering machinegun <sic> fire around him, Cpl. Crescenz courageously moved forward to a third bunker which he also succeeded in silencing, killing two more of the enemy and momentarily clearing the route of advance for his comrades. Suddenly, intense machinegun <sic> fire erupted from an unseen, camouflaged bunker. Realizing the danger to his fellow soldiers, Cpl. Crescenz disregarded the barrage of hostile fire directed at him and daringly advanced toward the position. Assaulting with his machinegun <sic>, Cpl. Crescenz was within 5 meters of the bunker when he was mortally wounded by the fire from the enemy ...".8

All of the above cases are different and yet, we regard each as an example of courage. The major difficulty with such examples, however, is that they don't define courage, but are simply anecdotal. Another

difficulty is their frequent reliance on synonyms. Synonyms, although they often have nearly the same meaning as other terms, can also portray significant differences.

A thesaurus is a good source to illustrate the differences among synonyms. In one listing for the term courage we find the following:

Courage, bravery, valor, boldness, strength, daring, gallantry, heroism, intrepidity, defiance, audacity, rashness, brinkmanship, confidence, self-reliance, chivalry, prowess, derring-do, resolution.

Manliness, manhood, nerve, pluck, backbone, grit, mettle, game, heart, heart of grace, hardihood, fortitude, heart of oak. Colloq., spunk, sand, what it takes, shot in the arm. Slang, guts, crust, moxie.

Exploit, feat, enterprise, (heroic) deed or act, bold stroke.

man or woman of courage or mettle, hero(ine), demigod(ess), lion, tiger, panther, bulldog, fire-eater.⁹

Even though this listing is incomplete (it lists only nouns but not verbs, adjectives, or antonyms), it does stimulate some comparisons.

Boldness, for example, appears similar in meaning to courage. In both terms there are elements of spirit and overcoming. Boldness, however, can convey a sense of being rude, forward, or impudent.

Fortitude suggests a type of courage, that being physical courage. A variety of physical notions, like

strength, endurance, and resistance, are linked with the term fortitude. Likewise, the term heroic conveys the notion of strength, a great strength, larger than life.

Other terms suggest further comparative elements with courage. Valor hints at a sense of worthiness or value. Daring connotes to venture, or hazard an attempt.

And intrepid presents a sense of fearlessness or undauntedness.

All of these terms, however, only hint at the various elements found in the concept of courage. None of them captures it completely. Perhaps the greatest value of synonyms is their demonstration of the difficulties encountered in defining courage.

If we cannot find a definition through the use of examples or synonyms, what other options do we have? Some writers, like Shalit, suggest we consult dictionaries to define courage.¹⁰ Let us look at a few definitions found in various dictionaries. A common source, Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, says courage is:

1. the attitude or response of facing and dealing with anything recognized as dangerous, difficult, or painful, instead of withdrawing from it.¹¹

This definition suggests courage is a psychological phenomenon. Courage is found within the individual when

faced with a special type of challenge. It also implies courage is a learned action, something anyone can attain with the proper training.

Do psychologists regard courage as Webster's suggests? A psychological dictionary, A Comprehensive Guide to Psychological and Psychoanalytic Terms, defines it as:

1. a personal attitude of meeting and dealing with dangers, obstacles, or difficulties rather than withdrawing from them.
2. a specific emotion that accompanies the behavior of confronting danger.¹²

This does indeed suggest courage is a property of behavior. This question, whether courage is a behavior, an emotion, or an action, has been debated not only by psychologists but also by philosophers.

Indeed, in the Dictionary of Philosophy, courage is defined as:

That state of mind or action that enables one to face danger without being overcome by attendant fear. In Greek philosophy courage was one of the cardinal virtues.... It was regarded by Aristotle as the mean between (the excess of) foolhardiness and (the defect of) cowardice.¹³

Such a definition opens up even further questions concerning the nature of courage. It seems to mix together the notions of courage being either a disposition or an action. Fear also appears to play a

role in defining courage. Additionally the notion of classifying courage, as good or bad, is ascribed in the use of the term virtue.

A discussion of courage, as a virtue and in ethics, sparks the interest of not only philosophers but also theologians. The Dictionary of Philosophy & Religion addresses courage as:

1. Plato ... a specific virtue of the guardian class.
2. Aristotle ... the mean.
3. Tillich ... the various forms of courage as a means of approaching the ultimate.¹⁴

Other issues are now raised in this definition including whether courage has forms or types, and whether courage is linked to the notion of worth.

And finally, since our focus is military contexts, let us consult a military reference, Army Field Manual 22-100, entitled Military Leadership. Courage is defined as a soldierly value:

Courage comes in two forms. Physical courage is overcoming fears of bodily harm and doing your duty. ... Moral courage is overcoming fears of other than bodily harm while doing what ought to be done. It is the courage to stand firm on your values, your moral principles, your convictions.¹⁵

The military definition also raises the issue of forms of courage. It also links courage to fear or fearlessness. It also implies that the opposite of

courage is cowardice (or succumbing to your fears).

As we consult various dictionaries and references, we seem to find definitions of courage depend upon their respective disciplines. If we refer to dictionaries of other countries, we will also notice differences based on languages (i.e., German, Muth; Italian, Corraggio) and cultures. Some of these dictionaries also make frequent use of both examples and synonyms. It appears we are no closer to defining courage than when we started.

Another approach which might be pursued is to review the works of writers who have examined the topic of courage. Let us do so in the next chapter.

CHAPTER II

HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

The concept of courage has been the subject of a number of historical interpretations. Courage, for example, is a term used freely throughout contemporary interpretations of Greek philosophy, particularly those of Plato and Aristotle. This term is often used to facilitate translations for modern readers but in doing so allows certain misconceptions to develop. Courage is not a Greek term, rather it is derived from the Latin "cor" meaning of or from the heart.¹⁶

The accurate Greek term is andreia. As a substitute for courage, andreia has stronger martial connotations, including notions of overcoming and combat. In the earlier work of Homer, the Iliad, andreia is the quality above all others which characterizes the great figures. Achilles, Hector, Ajax, Diomedes, and Agamemnon are all praised for being men of andreia.

Oh friends, be men, and let your hearts be strong,
 And let no warrior in the heat of fight do what may
 bring him shame in other's eyes; For more of those
 who shrink from shame are safe than fall in battle,
 while those who flee is neither glory nor reprieve
 from death.¹⁷

Beyond such myths and the rich literature of Greece, we find the concept of courage discussed by their philosophers. Plato analyzes it throughout his many dialogues including Laches, Laws, Protagoras, and Republic. In his writings he establishes that courage is the primary virtue of soldiers. In Laches, for example, various definitions of courage are debated by Socrates and two soldiers, the Athenian generals Laches and Nicias. They include whether:

- (1) Courage is "not running away from your post".
- (2) Courage is "a sort of endurance of the soul".
- (3) Courage is "a sort of wisdom" (which is later modified to a "matter of practical reasoning and nice judgement").¹⁸

Eventually all of these proposed definitions are rejected by Plato and we are left without one (in this dialogue). He does make some important observations including (a) there is an important distinction between

courage and fearlessness (which we will discuss later) and (b) courage is related to (or perhaps part of) virtue.

Walton points out Plato's greatest contribution is presenting the dichotomy between the view of courage as a sort of positive mental quality and the view of courage as a form of practical reasoning. Practical reasoning, in this case, being a sort of skill that blends "factual knowledge of a situation with moral qualities" in reacting to given situations.¹⁹

A more exact definition, which includes this form of practical reasoning, is provided by Aristotle, who defines andreia as:

Whoever stands firm against the right things, for the right end, in the right way, at the right time, and is correspondingly confident, . . . <for this person's> actions and feelings reflect what something is worth and what reason <prescribes>.²⁰

Aristotle's definition is somewhat complex (and confusing), particularly when taken out of the context of his ethical theory. Let us discuss it briefly.

According to Aristotle, the end of man is happiness, and happiness is acquired by possessing virtues. Virtues, or traits of excellence, are categorized into two types: virtues of thought and virtues of character.

Each type of virtue is acquired in a different manner. Virtues of thought are acquired by teaching while virtues of character result from habit (or the repetition of similar correct activities). Virtue, therefore, comes not from nature but from training.²¹

Virtues cause those who possess them to be in a good state and perform their functions well. For example, if *x* is a soldier, then the virtue of *x* is fighting well in battle.

Aristotle also makes the claim that the nature of virtue is the mean, the mean being the balance point on a continuum. In this case, courage is considered the mean between cowardice and rashness. The mean is distinguished by three caveats: (1) it is a mean relative to us (the moral agents), (2) it is defined by reference to reason (the reason of an intelligent person), and (3) it rests between excess and deficiency.²²

Also there are several preconditions of virtue including: (1) voluntary action (an agent's desires and preferences which cause praise or blame), (2) decision or choice (deliberation, involving reason and thought, but not appetite, emotion, or desires), and (3) a rational wish for the end (a desire for some good as an end in itself).²³

Therefore, the man who has andreia, according to

Aristotle, is the one who acts to fulfill a noble end in the face of true danger, yet moderates his fear appropriately to the danger of the situation. It is also worth mentioning that he restricts the term to its primary military significance, regarding other meanings as derivative or metaphorical.²⁴

The first noticeable change in this concept of courage occurs after the transition from Greek to Roman world political dominance. In this transition, the Greek term andreia is superseded by the Latin term fortitudo. One of the first Roman philosophers to address this new term is Cicero.

Fortitudo, he says, was correctly defined by the Stoics as:

the virtue which champions the cause of right.²⁵

He elaborates on this definition by including the notion of justice (as being morally right) as a part of fortitudo. Fortitudo is further marked by two characteristics: 1) an indifference to outward circumstances and 2) being concerned with great, useful, arduous, laborious, and dangerous actions. The latter characteristic is further distinguished by two criteria: a) the action must be recognized as morally good and b)

it must be freed from passion (or emotion).²⁶

Cicero also develops a clear distinction in his writings between two types of fortitudo, civic (or *domesticae*) and military (or *militaribus*) (which have been passed to us in translations as moral and physical forms of courage).²⁷ Civic fortitudo is concerned with actions in peace or public administration rather than activities in war. Although some people denigrate such a notion, Cicero defends it vigorously, even suggesting "There are, therefore, instances of civic courage (*sic*) that are not inferior to the courage (*sic*) of the soldier. Nay, the former calls for even greater energy and greater devotion than the latter."²⁸

Cicero, nonetheless, does appreciate the value of military fortitudo, which he defines as that of "brave and resolute spirit(s) ... (not) disconcerted in times of difficulty or ruffled ... keep(ing) one's presence of mind and one's self-possession and not (swerving) from the path of reason."²⁹ Without it, when facing the stress of war, society would pass into slavery and disgrace.

By distinguishing between different types or forms of courage, Cicero prepares the way for later interpreters of fortitudo, notably Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas defines fortitudo as being:

"... taken in two ways. First, as simply denoting a certain firmness of mind ... Secondly, fortitudo may be taken to denote firmness only in bearing and withstanding those things wherein it is most difficult to be firm, namely in certain grave dangers."³⁰

Aquinas asserts fortitudo is a cardinal virtue which has three criteria: 1) the elements of fear and daring, 2) the danger of death, and 3) endurance as its chief act (or action). Acts of fortitudo are conducted by brave men, who consider the act as a good in itself, but are performed without delight. Aquinas does admit, however, that anger has a part in fortitudo. It is not a seething anger or an emotional outburst of anger, it is rather a "moderate anger".³¹

Such a definition allows fortitudo to be applied to acts in a variety of situations beyond the battlefield. For example, religious martyrdom is an act of fortitudo. This act of sacrifice, the loss of one's life for the sake of personal faith, was recognized as the equivalent of a warrior's death. Martyrs were even called "valiant in battle" by the early Christian church.³² Aquinas also classified certain political and civil acts, which meet the previously stated criteria, as fortitudo.³³

Aquinas closely follows Aristotle's interpretation

of fortitudo (andreia), especially by: 1) rejecting it as an act of intuitive emotion and 2) not considering it (solely) as either fearlessness or daring. It is a matter of practical reasoning, dealing with a dangerous situation, and not involving excessive emotion.³⁴

After Aquinas, we find only a few philosophers who make comments on fortitudo. Descartes makes a brief reference to it as an emotion which, when excited by the will and reason, will remove fear.³⁵ Spinoza refers to fortitudo as an action which follows from active emotions (of the mind) and is marked by two parts: 1) magnanimity (*animositas*) and 2) nobility (*generositas*). Spinoza's fortitudo is more a unifying desire for friendship rather than a reasoned action or certain firmness in the face of danger.³⁶

Sometime after Spinoza, perhaps corresponding to what we call the Age of Reason, the term fortitudo is replaced by the Anglo-French term courage. There is little significance to this linguistic change, however, as philosophers continue to pay scant attention to the concept behind the term.

Hume alludes to courage as a virtue (meaning a mental action or quality), grounded in moral sentiment, which has worth in its utility to society.³⁷ He also makes reference to it as "the point of honour among

men, (which) derives its merit in a great measure, to artifice ... (and to) some foundation in nature."³⁸ Kant describes courage as "a quality of temperament" like resolution or perseverance, in contrast to certain "talents of the mind" such as intelligence, wit, or judgement.³⁹ Qualities of temperament depend on the nature of one's will, being either good or bad, to determine their character. Courage, in this interpretation, appears to be a secondary good, of mixed value, rather than an unqualifiable good.⁴⁰

Two modern philosophers, Carlyle and Nietzsche, do (indirectly) provide a new account of courage. Their interpretation is grounded in a sort of dynamic heroism or vitalism coupled with a rejection of Aquinas's notion of Christian virtues. Courage, for Carlyle, comes from his intuitive theory of action and should involve bold and aggressive striving. Nietzsche, while not so easily rejecting the role of reason, equates courageous action with his theory of the Superman, a man of bold actions based on a will to power.⁴¹ Walton suggests that both of these views can be construed as defining courage as a "bold determination and frank confrontation of fear".⁴²

This interpretation stands in sharp contrast to the account of courage given by Aristotle. In doing

so, it raises a number of questions about the nature of courage: What role does altruism or charity play in courage? What role does deliberation play in courage? And, a question raised earlier, does courage have any moral worth or value?

Interestingly, no modern or contemporary philosophers take up these questions or the general question posed by these interpretations of courage. One recent philosopher suggests the reason for this was a tacitly accepted opinion among such philosophers, that the study of virtues (including courage) was not a fundamental part of the work of ethics.⁴³

We have seen a change in this attitude in the past two decades. A number of philosophers have turned their attention to the subject of virtues, including courage. Let us consider their comments next.

CHAPTER III

RECENT INTERPRETATIONS

Among recent philosophers who have dealt with the concept of courage is H. W. von Wright. Von Wright defines courage as having three elements:

- 1) a trait of character connected with particular actions where the good of some person is involved
- 2) "practical judgement" (meaning knowledge relating to what is beneficial or harmful)
- 3) the emotion of fear.⁴⁴

Courage serves, if you will, to counteract the obscuring effect of fear in the face of danger (on our practical judgement).⁴⁵ This definition is basically Aristotlean with two exceptions. First, there is no requirement for the action to be a good one, and second, courage is defined in relation to fear but not fearful danger.

Von Wright's exceptions raise at least two questions concerning the nature of courage. One question focuses

on what has been called the problem of the courageous villain. Can, for example, a burglar who overcomes a sophisticated and dangerous protection network, in order to commit a crime, be called courageous? The other question has been raised before; Is courage the same thing as fearlessness? (which will be discussed later)

Another interpretation of courage is provided by Peter Geach. Rejecting the arguments of philosophers like R.M. Hare, who view the term courage as vestigial, Geach claims courage is the only virtue required by all people.⁴⁶ It is required in two senses: 1) a personal sense, when we all face death and 2) a communal sense, for facing daily life (e.g., the courage of miners working underground to provide fuel for society's existence). Courage is:

the virtue of the end . . . involving the facing of sudden danger or the endurance of affliction . . . <it is not courage>, if the cause for which it is done is worthless or positively vicious . . . <there is> no courage without the other moral virtues . . . <or> without a habit of sound judgment about practical situations⁴⁷

Geach follows in the tradition of Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas by requiring courage be tied to other moral virtues, and by requiring goodness in all acts of courage. There would be no courageous villain

problem for him.

Phillipa Foot offers an interpretation of courage which hints at elements found in both von Wright's and Geach's accounts. She classifies as courageous:

those few who without blindness or indifference are nevertheless fearless even in terrible circumstances.⁴⁸

Such a definition encompasses questions concerning the role of virtue, the role of fear, and the issue of goodness.

All virtues, including courage, have beneficial characteristics. Chief amongst these characteristics is their corrective nature. In the case of courage, for example, having this virtue enables one to overcome the deficiency of fear (or the desire for safety, being what motivates cowardly acts).⁴⁹

Foot makes some further comments on the subject of fear.⁵⁰ Fear is not a necessary condition for the display of courage. A soldier firing a machine gun at an overwhelming number of enemy soldiers might not tremble, and yet we might consider him courageous. Also another point about fear is that it is relative; what is fearful for me is not what is fearful for you. One soldier (with claustrophobia) might not go into a bunker even though

the enemy may be charging the perimeter, while another soldier might jump into a bunker at the sound of a distant explosion.

Lastly, Foot addresses the issue of goodness and the courageous villain. The villain may indeed act in what is called a courageous manner but we don't want to admit it as such. One way out of this apparent dilemma is to say the villain does have courage and demonstrated this courage through his action. In his, however, is just not a virtue.⁵¹ Another way out is Foot's poison analogy. Courage might be considered, like poison, property of a physical thing. Usually when poison is applied to something, say tainted meat, the animal that eats the meat will die. Occasionally poison doesn't work as expected. It may only make the animal sick or asleep. Therefore, just as poison doesn't always operate characteristically, courage might not be acting as a virtue in the case of the villain.⁵²

Alasdair MacIntyre believes virtues have no value in isolation, that is, without an understanding of their proper context. Accordingly, he develops a historical framework from which we can study or appreciate the virtues. Part of this framework focuses on heroic societies. Courage, he says, is a central virtue perhaps the central virtue, in such societies. Its

importance lies in being not only an individual quality but also a quality that sustains the individual's household and community. To be courageous "is to be someone on whom reliance can be placed".⁵³ This reliance helps establish the social structure of heroic society.

Courage in heroic society is further intimately connected with other (allied) virtues. It is also connected with the concepts of friendship, fate, and death. MacIntyre suggests understanding these connections (or interconnections) is a necessary part of courage itself.⁵⁴

One who understands this notion of courage would additionally understand that human life has a determinate form, the form of a certain kind of story. In other words, its not enough to understand how courage may be exhibited in the character of an individual but one must also understand what place it (courage) has in his story.

Courage is thus defined in heroic societies as:

a capacity not just to face particular harms and dangers but to face a particular kind of pattern of harms and dangers, a pattern in which individual lives find their place and which lives in turn exemplify.⁵⁵

From this basis, MacIntyre goes on to discuss, like we have, other historic conceptions of courage. Finally he ventures his own definition as:

Courage, the capacity to risk harm or danger to oneself, has its role in human life because of (its) connection with care and concern.⁵⁶

We see again in this definition that courage has moral value or worth, particularly in connection with a relationship to others. Courage is also construed as a capacity as opposed to a property of actions.

A somewhat different interpretation is presented by James Wallace. Wallace views human nature as a complex in which both virtues and vices exist as primary functioning elements. Drawing upon R.B. Brandt's motivational theory of character traits, he regards virtues as privative states.⁵⁷ In this view, vices (like cowardice) are dispositions to act whereas virtues (like courage) are not. Their relationship is analogous to that of cold and heat; cold is not a degree of heat but rather the absence of heat.

However, courage is not solely a negative quality. It also has a positive aspect found in its ability to "cope rationally with fears and to face dangers".⁵⁸

Courage might be said to be "the positive capacity for acting rationally when certain motives are apt to incline us to do otherwise".⁵⁹

This is not, however, Wallace's definition of courage. Rather he defines courage in an analytic manner, using the following five clauses:

- (a) A (the moral agent) believes that it is dangerous for him to do Y (an act).
- (b) A believes that his doing Y is worth the risks it involves.
- (c) A believes that it is possible for him not to do Y.
- (d) The danger A sees in doing Y must be sufficiently formidable that most people would find it difficult in the circumstances to do Y.
- (e) A is not coerced into doing Y by threats of punishment which he fears more than he fears the dangers of doing Y.⁶⁰

Wallace's definition follows earlier interpretations closely, particularly in emphasizing the elements of danger, individual choice, and moral worth. It is nonetheless subject to a number of criticisms including (1) it is too broad or inclusive (A's act could be immoral even though he believes it worth the risk; the courageous villain problem again), (2) it places too much emphasis on an agent's belief (mere belief appears not to be sufficient to prevent certain types of irrational acts), and (3) according to (2) it is open to a number of

counterexamples such as misguided fanatics, idiots, schizophrenics, or gamblers (whose acts would meet Wallace's criterion but would not be acts we would want to term courageous).⁶¹

Undoubtedly the most thorough recent interpretation of courage is given by Douglas Walton in his book, Courage: A Philosophic Investigation. Walton examines a number of previous accounts of courage, commenting on their strengths and weaknesses, and discerning a number of courage's composite elements. These include psychological, practical reasoning, and ethical elements.⁶² Walton uses these elements to provide us with another five clause definition of courage:

(P1) In order to bring about B (a state of affairs), a (the moral agent) considers it necessary to bring about A (a preceding state of affairs).

(P2) a brings about A.

(P3) a could (or could not) have brought about A.

(E1) a considers that B is (highly) worth a's bringing about. (see note #63)

(E2) a considers that his bringing about A is dangerous or difficult (to a formidable extent).⁶³

The three clauses designated P concern the practical reasoning element while the two clauses designated E focus on the ethical element. An example of courage, using Walton's definition, might be the case of Pfc. Bryant Womack.

Assigned as a medical aid man for the 25th Infantry Division, during the Korean War, Private Womack went out on a night combat patrol. After sudden contact with a superior enemy force produced numerous patrol casualties,

"Pfc. Womack went immediately to their aid, although this necessitated exposing himself to a devastating hail of enemy fire, during which he was seriously wounded. Refusing medical aid for himself, he continued moving among his comrades to administer aid.

While he was aiding 1 man, he was again struck by enemy mortar fire, this time suffering the loss of his right arm. Although he knew the consequences should immediate aid not be administered, he still refused aid and insisted that all efforts be made for the benefit of others that were wounded. Although unable to perform the task himself, he remained on the scene and directed others in first-aid techniques. The last man to withdraw, he walked until he collapsed from loss of blood, and died a few minutes later while being carried by his comrades."64

Placed in Walton's matrix, it would look like this:

(P1) In order that aid be provided to wounded soldiers (B), Pfc. Womack (a) considers it necessary to stay on the battlefield and refuse aid for his own wounds (A).

(P2) Pfc. Womack stays on the battlefield and refuses aid for his own wounds.

(P3) Pfc. Womack can choose to stay on the battlefield (to provide aid) or return to the aid station (to administer aid).

(E1) Pfc. Womack considers that providing aid to his comrades on the battlefield, who are seriously wounded, is highly worth bringing about.

(E2) Pfc. Womack, as a trained medic, is aware that

refusing aid for his own wounds is dangerous (or difficult).

In the above definition, it may be noticed that Walton leaves out any reference to a psychological element. This doesn't mean he thinks such an element unimportant. Instead, like Wallace, he places the psychological element in his definition of cowardice.⁶⁵

Cowardice is defined as:

- (P1) In order to bring about B, a considers that it is necessary to bring about A.
- (NP2) a does not bring about A.
- (NP3) a could have brought about A.
- (E1) It is a's considered duty to bring about B.
- (S1) a experiences fear.
- (S2) Because a experiences fear, a does not bring about A.⁶⁶

Here NP stands for not acting in accordance with practical reasoning, E for ethical, and S for psychological.

What is significant about Walton's definition of cowardice is not the psychological element, but rather the idea that cowardice is not the contradiction of courage. From the time of Athenian Greece onward, cowardice is considered the direct opposite of courage. Aristotle contrasts the two concepts in his Ethics; the brave man "fears the right things" while the coward

"fears the wrong things".⁶⁷ By doing so, he establishes a tradition to which all subsequent interpreters subscribe. Cicero, Aquinas, Carlyle, and Nietzsche, as well as all recent philosophers, follow this dichotomy.

Walton's definition does suffer from a number of shortcomings, however, including (1) it may beg the question (of whether courage is a good quality because the ethical clauses require that the outcome B must be worth bringing about) and (2) that difficult (and not difficult and dangerous) acts can be the object of courage (as one can train to overcome difficulties).⁶⁸

With Walton's account, we complete our survey of past and recent interpreters of the concept of courage. Although no single interpretation is adequate for our inquiry, this approach certainly has been more fruitful than any of our earlier ones. In the next chapter we will discuss the various elements which appear to be central to a definition of courage.

CHAPTER IV

THE DIMENSIONS OF COURAGE

Thus far in our analysis of the concept of courage we have utilized a number of approaches. We considered courage through the use of examples, synonyms, and dictionary definitions. We also discussed a number of historical interpretations including those of Aristotle, Aquinas, and Carlyle. Finally we examined the works of recent writers, like Wallace and Walton. We shall now consider some of the implications of these various approaches.

All definitions or interpretations of the concept of courage share certain common elements or features which are, for the most part, noncontroversial. Each interpretation also has distinct elements which serve to distinguish it from other explanations. These latter distinguishing elements are often the subject of much

criticism or debate. Let us look, in turn, at each of these clusters of elements.

The first common element is that of a dangerous environment. Acts of courage do not take place in an everyday, peaceful setting. There must be something unique which transforms our environment, our circumstances, into a setting for courage. This transformation might be manifested in the dangers of warfare, armed conflict, or terrorist activities. For instance, the rich farmland between the Noye and Somme rivers in France is completely flat and devoid of hedges.

It is now a place of beauty, peace and tranquility. And yet, seventy years ago, the spectre of war transformed it into one of the bloodiest battlefields of all times.⁶⁹ Or take the airport at Entebbe, Uganda; a rather dull place with a number of nondescript buildings and facilities. In 1976, the hijacking of a French commercial airliner by PLO guerrillas transformed the airport into a stage for courageous action. Israeli commandoes, travelling over four thousand kilometers, stormed the terminal, overcame PLO and Ugandan resistance, and rescued 95 hostages, with the loss of only one man.⁷⁰

Other ways in which the environment can be altered include disasters or accidents. Disasters come in a

number of forms including natural disasters (like earthquakes or hurricanes), man-made disasters (such as fires or bombings), and combinations of disasters (involving both nature and man, as when an airliner crashes due to severe weather or a ship capsizes in a storm). Accidents might be construed as smaller disasters, things which happen on a more intimate or personal level, like house fires or car wrecks.

What all of these transformations share is the imposition of some danger (or dangers) which normally does not exist, resulting in a dangerous environment.

The second common element is an awareness of the dangerous environment itself. This awareness (or mentation) is concerned with knowledge of two things: 1) the nature of the dangerous environment (i.e., type and extent) and 2) the risks posed by that dangerous environment (i.e., the odds).⁷¹ A combat paratrooper knows there are certain dangers in jumping from an aircraft (his parachute might not open, the aircraft may crash, or he could be shot while descending). He also knows (relatively) the risks of those things happening. For example, there might be a 1 in 100 chance his parachute won't open or a 1 in 15 chance of his being shot.

Awareness is important in how we judge acts of

courage. It helps us separate acts of true courage from acts of seeming courage. For instance, we consider the soldier who jumps on an enemy hand grenade as courageous.

However, if another soldier is asleep and inadvertently rolls over on a grenade, we would not call him courageous.

The third common element is a sense of overcoming. By overcoming, I mean a significant challenge or obstacle is faced and surmounted by one or more people. It too takes numerous forms. Overcoming may be an action (like a soldier jumping on a hand grenade) or it may be no action (like not running away from the bunker when hundreds of enemy soldiers are charging it). Overcoming may be accomplished in relation to the dangerous environment (rescuing someone from a burning gasoline truck) or in relation to one's reaction to the dangerous environment (overcoming a fear of heights to scale cliffs which house an enemy gun emplacement). Overcoming may be an attempt to do something which is successful (stopping a main battle tank, which is headed towards your position, by shooting it with an anti-tank weapon at short range) or which fails (stepping on a mine, while attempting to cross a minefield, in order to rescue a wounded soldier).

Beyond these three common elements or features,

however, different interpretations agree on little. This is not to say there are not other common elements (which define courage), but rather different interpreters emphasize different dimensions of those features.

At least seven controversial dimensions in the concept of courage can be identified including:

- 1) whether it is purely behavioral or also refers to emotions?
- 2) whether it is concerned with motivations or not?
- 3) whether it is subjective or objective?
- 4) whether it involves other mental states besides awareness (like deliberation or calculation) or not?
- 5) whether it is most fundamentally a property of actions or a disposition?
- 6) whether it is only descriptive, or descriptive and evaluative?
- 7) whether it involves rationality or not?

Let us explore each of these dimensions in greater detail starting with the question about emotions (#1 above).

Suppose we have two soldiers, Sergeants Palmer and White, each of whom performs a courageous act on the battlefield. Sergeant Palmer runs across an empty field, climbs onto an enemy tank, opens its turret hatch and drops a grenade inside. The grenade explodes, killing

the crew, and disabling the tank. During his assault Sergeant Palmer's conduct is absolutely fearless.

Sergeant White also attacks and stops an enemy tank.

Instead of using a hand grenade, he uses a land mine.

Sergeant White activates the mine, runs to the tank, and tosses the mine under one of the tank's treads. The mine explodes, killing the crew, and stopping the tank.

Sergeant White, however, is literally shaking in his boots during the entire episode. Afterwards he is found drenched in sweat, continuing to tremble and quiver.

Now I would call both of these acts courageous, despite the emotions or feelings of either soldier. Both acts possess the previously mentioned common elements of courage (dangerous environment, awareness, and overcoming). Sergeant White's feelings, apparently of fear, did not affect the outcome of his act (one way or the other) nor did the (apparent) lack of emotion influence Sergeant Palmer's action.

One element which complicates our discussion of emotion is fear. Fear and its counterpart, fearless (or fearlessness) are often discussed in relation to courage.

Some interpreters say that courage is simply fearlessness. As I have already suggested, such a definition is inadequate for explaining numerous courageous acts. Instead, fear cuts back and forth

across the various dimensions of courage; first as an emotion, then as a motive, and finally as reality or perception.

An objection might be raised concerning a soldier who overcomes a specific emotion (such as fear) in order to complete his courageous act. Might not his action be worth more than a soldier whose action was not hindered by this emotion or fear?

Consider the example of "tunnel rats" in Vietnam. "Tunnel rats" were U.S. soldiers who climbed into vast networks of underground tunnels, used by North Vietnamese armies, in order to fight the enemy. If one soldier, Private China, suffers from claustrophobia, and yet volunteers to serve as a "tunnel rat", wouldn't we say his courage was more praiseworthy than a "tunnel rat" who didn't suffer from claustrophobia? Although I would admit Private China's volunteering was commendable in itself, (in light of his personal fear) it adds, I will argue, nothing extra to any courageous acts he might perform.

I argue this on two grounds: 1) whether a soldier is feeling any emotion (or emotions) is difficult to evaluate or judge (i.e., in the earlier example, was Sergeant White shaking from fear or anger?) and 2) in recognizing acts of courage, military authorities do not

consider a soldier's feelings as either a part of the act or as a criterion for an award. Courageous men (or acts) are normally discovered during debriefings (or after action reviews) which occur after the battle. A reviewer's emphasis is on the particulars of that battle: who, what, when, and how, not a soldier's emotional state. The question "how did you feel?" rarely, if ever, is asked.

Therefore, in analyzing acts of courage, particularly those which occur in military contexts, the role of emotion appears to be relatively unimportant. In other words, it is the behavior that matters, not the emotion or the feeling.

Closely related to this dimension of courage is the issue of motivation. The primary question raised here is whether a soldier's purpose (or motivation) matters in the conduct of his courageous act? Such a question may have not only psychological overtones but also ethical ones.

Take the following cases as illustrative of the role motivation might play in the concept of courage.

Sergeant Silva is a squad leader in a light infantry unit engaged in combat. During a patrol, the unit comes under fire, and two of the lead soldiers fall to the ground seriously wounded. Thinking only of his duty to

his soldiers, Sergeant Silva crawls under heavy enemy fire to their position and pulls them back to a relatively safe position. After repelling the ambush, a medivac helicopter is called in and the two wounded soldiers are evacuated. Sergeant Silva's quick action results in the saving of both soldiers' lives.

Corporal Dean is in charge of an anti-tank weapons team which is being observed in action by the division commander, a two-star general. The general has made it known that he will reward courageous acts on the spot, usually with a bronze star medal. Knowing this, Corporal Dean leads his team out into the middle of an assaulting force of ten enemy tanks, and quickly destroys four of them. Afterwards, the general awards Corporal Dean and his crew members the promised medals.

Lieutenant Wagner is leading his platoon during a fierce battle for a bridge. His former roommate from college, also a platoon leader, is trapped with his unit on the other side of the bridge. Thinking of all the past favors his roommate gave him during their years together, Lieutenant Wagner attacks the enemy with everything his platoon has, and by doing so, forces the enemy from the bridge. His platoon secures the bridge and rescues his stranded classmate's unit.

Captain Dolan is a fire support officer with an tank brigade which is under attack by superior enemy forces. The situation looks bleak. The commander, a colonel, gives Captain Dolan important secret documents which must not fall into enemy hands. He asks Captain Dolan to get them back to headquarters, no matter what. As the enemy overwhelms the tank unit, Captain Dolan escapes and makes his way back across the war-torn battlefield. Traveling by day and night, without rest, food, or shelter, and under constant threat of capture, he makes it back to headquarters in a week. Giving the documents to the commanding general, Captain Dolan says he did it only because the colonel asked him to.

Sergeant Ross is the team leader of an anti-terrorist unit overseas. His team conducts an ambush on a known terrorist leader at his headquarters. This terrorist has killed numerous innocent civilians, including children, during the past five years. One of the children was Sergeant Ross's only son. Sergeant Ross is also up for promotion and has been told that his success in this operation will secure it. And two American hostages, both held captive for three years, were located in the headquarters. Their release results in unprecented publicity for the unit, making a national

hero out of the team and its leader, Sergeant Ross.

In each of these cases different motives (or motivations) were at work. In the first case, the motive was a sense of duty; in the second case, the motive was glory; in the third case, a desire to repay past favors; and, in the fourth case, a desire to comply with a request. The fifth and last case appears to have a number of possible motivations including revenge, promotion, duty, and glory.

Is there a difference between these respective courageous actions, based solely upon motive or motivation? I will argue that there is no significant difference between the acts of say, Sergeant Silva and Lieutenant Wagner. Although their motivations might be different, this has no effect on the courageousness of their actions.

The dimension of motives, like that of emotions is complicated. In gross or obvious cases, like Corporal Dean, it might be possible to isolate a soldier's motive for action, but usually multiple motives exist, like in the case of Sergeant Ross. Was it one motive or another which sparked him to act? Was revenge a stronger motive than his desire for promotion or glory? Might they all not be equal motivations?

Additionally it is difficult to explain or evaluate

motivations. Certainly most commanders or staff officers, those who recognize the courageous acts of soldiers, are not trained to do so. In fact, this is a task only for psychologists and psychoanalysts, a group which is usually in short supply on a battlefield.

Let us now turn to another related dimension, whether courage is objective or subjective? At issue here is the matter of perceived danger versus real (or actual) danger. Private Sundeen, for example, is providing defensive fire for his platoon as it withdraws from the battlefield at night. He is armed with a M2 .50 caliber machine gun and a box of hand grenades. Suddenly he hears strange sounds, like running feet, growling and wild yells, and rifles being fired. Then he sees numerous enemy soldiers running towards him. Private Sundeen opens fire with his machine gun, firing until the barrel melts down, and then throws every grenade he has at the enemy. The morning after, the area outside his position is checked and over one hundred enemy soldiers are found dead or wounded. It is apparent Private Sundeen's actions were based on real danger.

In contrast, take the case of Private Wheeler. Private Wheeler is in a similar situation on the battlefield. He hears strange sounds, moaning and mooring, coming towards his position. In some nearby

bushes, Private Wheeler sees some moving shadows. The shadows suddenly become two enemy soldiers who quickly disappear. Rather than wait to confirm his sighting, he attacks in a ferocious manner, emptying his weapon and the hand grenade box. A check of his perimeter reveals not only one dead enemy soldier but also two dozen dead cows. His actions, although resembling those of Private Sundeen, were based on perceived danger. We wouldn't call Private Wheeler or his actions courageous.

This distinction between types of danger is important in military contexts. Recognition of courageous acts occurs based upon real situations (and real dangers). Otherwise we can imagine any number of absurd cases in which soldiers would be recognized for courageous acts based on noncourageous circumstances (i.e., a soldier suffering from acrophobia (fear of heights) demands an award for climbing down from his upper-level bunk one morning).

So far we've had little to say about the role of mental operations in the concept of courage. Beyond awareness, which is obviously such an operation, one might ask what part do other activities, like deliberation or calculation, play? This is a difficult question, particularly in military contexts (i.e., on the fast-paced, ever-changing modern battlefield).

In some cases of courage there appears to be a significant amount of deliberation involved; for instance, the Israeli commando raid at Entebbe. Extensive information gathering, risk assessment, and detailed operational planning were all part of this deliberation process.⁷²

Another case which comes to mind is that of Lieutenant Wigle at Monte Frassino during the Second World War. Lieutenant Wigle took command of a platoon which had previously failed in repeated assaults on a strongly fortified hill position:

Leading his men up the bare, rocky slopes through intense and concentrated fire, he succeeded in reaching the first of the (three) stone walls. Having boosted himself to the top and perching there in full view of the enemy, he drew and returned their fire while his men helped each other up and over. Following the same method, he successfully negotiated the second. Upon reaching the top of the third wall, he faced three houses which were the key point of the enemy defense. Ordering his men to follow him, he made a dash through a hail of machine-pistol fire to reach the nearest house. Firing his carbine as he entered, he drove the enemy before him out of the back door and into the second house. Following closely on the heels of the foe, he drove them from the second house into the third (house) where they took refuge in the cellar. When his men rejoined him, they found him mortally wounded on the cellar steps which he had started to descend to force the surrender of the enemy. His heroic action resulted in the capture of 36 German soldiers and the seizure of the strongpoint.⁷³

Lieutenant Wigle obviously had to engage in a number of calculations during his courageous action. First he calculated he could successfully lead the (apparently demoralized) platoon. Second he figured he could conduct the operation, the assault on the hill, successfully. During the operation itself, Lieutenant Wigle had to calculate: 1) how he and his unit would climb the hill and 2) how they would assault the position. On a different level, he must have deliberated about his personal attack on the houses. If he attacked house #1, how many enemy were there? and how would he attack them? These questions are representative of the type of calculations which Lieutenant Wigle would make.

In other cases, however, it is debatable whether deliberation occurs. Recall Private Anderson, who sacrificed his life by quickly wrapping his body around an enemy hand grenade. A simple analysis of his action might be: (1) a hand grenade was thrown, (2) the soldier saw it, (3) he immediately covered the grenade with his body, and (4) he was killed. In a matter of seconds the entire action was complete.

How much deliberation can occur in such a situation? What thoughts, concerns, and assessments go through a soldier's mind? Some observers suggest in these types of cases, the mind speeds up and with it, all bodily

operations (including deliberation and reaction). What we are dealing with, in the context of time, is micro-seconds, not seconds. So the reactions of the soldier are normal, but occur in rapid sequence.

Although I would admit the danger imposed by a live hand grenade would probably cause one to "want" to react fast, and that certain physiological changes happen (i.e., a release of adrenaline), it remains difficult to see how much calculation can occur in 1-5 seconds (The time between when a grenade is thrown and it explodes). The suggestion is that a soldier analyzes, reflects, and decides on whether his life and obligations are more important than those of his comrades, in less time than it takes to read this sentence.

What complicates this dimension is the occasional case which appears to validate the "micro-second" argument. For instance, Specialist John Baca, assigned to the 1st Cavalary Division during the Vietnam war, was leading a recoilless rifle team in support of a night ambush when:

a fragmentation grenade was thrown into the midst of the patrol. Fully aware of the danger to his comrades, Sp4c. Baca, unhesitatingly, and with complete disregard for his own safety, covered the grenade with his steel helmet and fell on it as the grenade exploded, thereby absorbing the lethal fragments and concussion with his body.⁷⁴

Specialist Baca obviously had the time and the faculties to: (1) remove his helmet, (2) place it on the grenade, and (3) cover the helmet with his body. By placing the steel helmet between himself and the grenade, Baca was reducing the effects of the blast and the danger to himself and his comrades (Specialist Baca survived the explosion).

Or to cite another case, consider Pharmacist's Mate John Willis on Iwo Jima Island, during the Second World War. Although previously wounded while administering first aid to others, Willis returned to his assigned unit during a savage hand-to-hand enemy counterattack:

daringly advanced to the extreme frontlines under mortar and sniper fire to aid a marine lying wounded in a shell-hole . . . Willis calmly continued to administer blood plasma to his patient, promptly returning the first grenade which landed in the shell-hole while he was working and hurling back 7 more in quick succession before the ninth 1 exploded in his hand and instantly killed him.⁷⁵

Pharmacist's Mate Willis "calculated" that he (also) had the time and faculties to (1) continue to administer aid and (2) retrieve and throw back numerous hand grenades. In both of these cases, some sort of mental operation (or

operations) appeared to occur.

Perhaps this is not a case of either-or (either mental operations or not) but rather a case of sufficient and necessary conditions. It may be (sufficient) that calculation occurs, like Specialist Baca, but not required or needed (necessary), like Private Anderson. By offering this explanation of the role of mental operations, we are able to accomodate cases as (apparently) diverse as Wigle and Anderson.

Another dimension of courage concerns whether we are talking about the actions themselves or the men who perform those actions. The common conception is that courage is a property of character, rather than a property of an individual action.⁷⁶ This conception is readily embraced by the military in a number of ways and for a variety of reasons.

One of the ways the military ascribes to the common conception of courage is through personnel evaluations and reports. In the Army, for example, commissioned and noncommissioned officers receive, as a minimum, one evaluation report every year.⁷⁷ This report includes administrative data (like name, rank, and organizational assignment of the officer), authentication (name and ranks of evaluators), duty description, and performance/potential information.

In the performance/potential section of the report is a sub-section on professional ethics. Professional ethics, according to the report, include the characteristics of dedication, responsibility, loyalty, discipline, integrity, selflessness, moral standards, and moral courage.⁷⁸ Evaluators provide comments as appropriate, specifically in cases where the rated officer is particularly outstanding or needs improvement.

Any positive comments on moral courage are considered beneficial to an officer (and his career) while negative comments are detrimental.

Another way in which the military recognizes courage as a property of character is through its awards programs. Awards in the military are given for two purposes: 1) heroism and 2) achievement.⁷⁹ These awards are further distinguished as being either for individuals or for units (with the most noteworthy, like the Medal of Honor and Distinguished Service Cross, being presented only to individuals). A soldier who wears numerous heroism medals on his uniform is impressive, both within the military and without (to the public). Military awards also serve as discriminators, by marking those men who possess courage from those who don't or have not yet been tested in combat.

Additionally, the military recognizes the common

conception of courage in its training and education programs. Soldiers learn that courage, both moral and physical, is something which good soldiers possess. For example, Army Field Circular 22-1, (titled Leader Development Program Values) which is used to teach Majors at the Army Staff College, lists courage as a "soldierly value".⁸⁰ It further clarifies that "soldierly values are just that--they apply to all soldiers". The implication here being all soldiers should aspire to this good characteristic.

Perhaps the major reason for holding to courage as a property of character is it allows us to distinguish amongst soldiers. In the military this is important for two reasons: 1) competitiveness and 2) knowledge.

The military is, in a certain sense, a highly competitive society. Soldiers are always being tested and compared with each other. On the physical level, this competition is found in daily workouts, semi-annual fitness tests, and unit sporting events. Between individuals, the questions include: Who can run the fastest? Who is the strongest? Who has the most endurance? Between units, questions asked are: Which has the best football team?, Which has the best softball team? Which has the best PT (Physical Test) score average? On the mental level, the competition focuses on

skill tests and levels of education. Who is the most proficient in his military specialty (e.g., operating a radar, driving a main battle tank)? Who has the best basic soldiering skills (e.g., rifle marksmanship)? Which unit has the highest GT (General Test) scores? Which unit has the most high school graduates? Overall, questions are raised concerning proficiency and accomplishment. Who has the most medals? Who has been promoted the fastest? Or which unit had the best scores on annual readiness tests or exercises?

Military units also constantly seek knowledge of their respective soldiers for readiness reasons. Although such knowledge will include information about the previously mentioned competitiveness, it will primarily focus on how a unit operates together. For example, in an infantry squad, the squad leader, Sergeant Shearer, will know that Corporal Jones is a steady and competent soldier while Private First Class Wilson needs to be watched constantly (or he'll get into trouble). Specialist Brown may be a supreme marksman with his M16A1 rifle but not with a M60 machine gun. Private Goatly may have rock steady nerves and Private Rock may panic at the first sound of gunfire.

What all this (personal) knowledge of personnel allows Sergeant Shearer to do is configure his unit to

meet different threats and missions. For instance, in charging an enemy position, the Sergeant may want Private Goatly up front and Private Rock in the rear, while Specialist Brown might be on a flank. This same self-knowledge may also apply to larger and more diverse organizations. An Air Force Wing Commander, Colonel May, while not knowing the names of all his pilots, might know that 1st Squadron, led by Lieutenant Colonel Adcock, is relatively new to combat support missions and 3rd Squadron, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Crews, is more experienced in such attacks.

The theory that courage is a property of character does, however, have certain flaws or failings. These failings are quickly pointed out by those who adhere to the opposing position (that courage is a property of actions). A major failing concerns the issues of personality. In at least two types of cases, the personality of agents presents problems for those who assert the common conception. These are: 1) bad character and 2) inconsistent character.⁸¹

Walton, in his account of courage, provides us an excellent example of the first type of case in Seaman Tiggs.⁸² Tiggs, a sailor in C.S. Forester's novel The Ship, has a character which is completely opposite of that which we normally associate with courageous persons.

He is impulsive, not very intelligent, and drinks heavily on shore leave. And yet, when the ship is on fire and severely damaged, it is Seaman Tiggs who performs the courageous act (opening a burning door), thereby saving the lives of his fellow crew members. Although a fictitious account, the Tiggs case has a number of parallels in real life, and therefore raises a serious challenge to equating courage (only) with good character.

Lord Moran provides us an example of the inconsistency case in his book The Anatomy of Courage. Sergeant Turner, a veteran of numerous battles on the Western Front in the First World War, is recognized as a courageous man. He is someone others look up to for leadership and guidance. But one day Sergeant Turner cracks up (from shell-shock) and is unable to fight anymore.⁸³ The Sergeant Turner case serves to remind us that men who act courageously in one (or more) situation(s), might not act similarly in other situations.

Therefore, a major advantage to subscribing to courage as a property of actions is it allows us to transcend the issue of personality. In other words, character or consistency (in men) is not a problem, if we focus on their actions and not their personalities.

Although I tend to agree with this assessment, some allowance must be made for cases of what might be called repetitive acts of courage. By repetitive acts, I mean individuals who complete numerous acts of courage over a lengthy period of time, like U.S. Marine Corps General "Chesty" Puller. General Puller won five Navy Crosses, the second highest wartime heroism award in the Navy, for separate courageous acts during a career of thirty-seven years.⁸⁴ Or another famous marine officer, Smedley D. Butler, one of the very few men to ever win two Congressional Medals of Honor.⁸⁵ Puller's and Butler's acts look to be something more than a temporary condition (attributable to act-courage), instead they look like a regular set of occurrences or a habit (or maybe even dispositional-courage)

Finally, something else is suggested by the alternative theory of courage that bears mentioning; mainly that courage has its own (special) status among virtues. This status is derived from two circumstances which appear unique to courage: 1) it involves inconsistency, and 2) it involves the unusual. Perhaps the best way to illustrate this status is to compare courage with another virtue, like intelligence.

When we evaluate intelligence, we can do so by any number of means: tests, examinations, or experiments. In

these evaluations we are basically looking for one thing: consistency. The soldier who correctly answers ninety out of a hundred possible questions (on an examination) is classified as intelligent or smart (based upon the consistency of his answers). It is the number of times he put down the right answer that is the basis for our evaluation. In courage though, we look for the inconsistent. Although a soldier may normally stay in his trench during a battle, it is the one time he gets out, charges, and captures the enemy bunker that we recognize as courageous.

Additionally, our expectation is that intelligence is something normal. We anticipate having a certain number of intelligent soldiers. We further expect intelligence is something that can be built upon and reinforced in our daily routine. We send soldiers to schools or colleges, give them training in special skills (e.g., foreign languages), or have them read in order to expand their intelligence. Courage, in contrast, is unusual. Courageous acts are often termed "above and beyond", meaning they exceed the normal expectation in a given situation. In fact, it is the rareness of courageous acts that marks them as special. Whereas a normal soldier, when wounded by enemy fire, might stop in his efforts to rescue a stranded comrade in no-man's

land, the courageous soldier continues in his efforts. And, although the military wishes otherwise, there is no program to train soldiers to be courageous.

This special status is something we will have to keep in mind concerning the concept of courage, particularly in relation to the other virtues which are important to the military

The next dimension we must address is whether courage is only descriptive, or is it descriptive and evaluative? Our primary focus in this question concerns the notion of moral worth or goodness. Must we have an element of goodness in order to have a courageous act? The issue of goodness can involve the moral agent (the soldier), the action (the situation), or both the agent and the action. In the first case, the question raised is can we have a "bad" soldier perform a courageous act? In the second case, the question is must there be a "good" purpose in the courageous act? And in the third case, does there have to be both a "good" soldier and a "good" purpose in order to have a courageous act?

Consider the case of Sergeant Green, a tank commander, in an armored battalion stationed in West Germany. Sergeant Green was an excellent student in high school and graduated in the top five percent of his class. He was also a fullback on the varsity football

team and an outfielder on the baseball team. Sergeant Green was active in the Boy Scouts, eventually becoming an Eagle Scout. When he enlisted in the Army, he excelled on all standardized tests but chose to serve in armor (because of his love of mechanics). An honor graduate of basic and advanced individual training, Sergeant Green was promoted early to the ranks of Private First Class, Specialist, and Sergeant. In his three years in the Army he has won two Commendation Medals and two Achievement Medals. He is respected not only by his superiors and peers but also by the soldiers in his crew.

In a border incident, three Soviet tanks penetrate into friendly German territory. Sergeant Green's platoon responds to the intrusion and are quickly taken under fire. The Soviet tanks destroy the platoon leader's tank and disable another U.S. tank. Sergeant Green responds in splendid fashion, maneuvering behind the three Soviet tanks, and fires several HEAT rounds into them. This close-in, destructive fire disables two of the tanks in short order. After his own tank is hit, Sergeant Green evacuates the crew and engages the remaining tank with a short-range, anti-tank weapon. Despite a direct hit, the Soviet tank is still engaging other vehicles with its main gun. Sergeant Green, using his disabled tank's

radio, calls in artillery support which quickly destroys the tank. For his courageous action, Sergeant Green is awarded the Distinguished Service Medal and two Purple Hearts.

Now let us consider in comparison, the case of Corporal Turck, a combat engineer assigned to a unit in combat in Latin America. Corporal Turck is the antithesis of Sergeant Green. A high school dropout, Corporal Turck was constantly in trouble with the police prior to entering the Army. In fact, during one of these troubling incidents, a judge gave him a choice: either join the military or go to jail. Corporal Turck chose the former but had difficulty enlisting. Neither the Air Force or Navy would take him. Fortunately, for him, the Army was in need of meeting a quota that month and Turck was inducted.

Once in the military, Corporal Turck was less than a model soldier. Although in excellent physical condition, he never applied himself to assigned work. He had to complete basic training twice, received an Article 15 (punishment) for striking a noncommissioned officer, and was demoted in rank three times. In order to minimize his bad influence on other soldiers, his commander assigned him to the support platoon.

The unit is assigned to a combat zone in Latin

America and Corporal Turck almost misses deployment (due to being late and drunk). On their second morning in-country, guerillas attack the headquarters and support elements while the engineer units are working on a road fifteen miles away. A group of five guerillas attempt to enter the command post when Corporal Turck engages them with a M60 machine gun. Quickly killing three of the enemy, he chases the other two back into the jungle. He next attacks an enemy personnel carrier, throws two hand grenades under the vehicle, and sprays the drivers window with his machine gun. Finally Corporal Turck tackles and captures the enemy guerilla leader, after chasing away his security force.

Corporal Turck is awarded a Distinguished Service Cross for his bravery in action. His recommendations, while no less accurate than those of Sergeant Green, are written begrudgingly by his commanders. They can't comprehend how a soldier so "bad" in peacetime could be so "good" in war.

Some individuals might argue that while Sergeant Green is certainly deserving of his awards, due to his good moral character, Corporal Turck is not. Corporal Turck's "bad" character is inconsistent with his (courageous) actions and therefore, he is undeserving of such awards.

I basically disagree with this assessment. Like the arguments presented in favor of emotions and motives, this argument ignores the essence of the courageous act. Both Sergeant Green's and Corporal Turck's acts involve a dangerous environment, an element of overcoming, and awareness. Neither the good character of one nor the bad character of the other affected those common elements. Nor did their respective moral worth affect their actions (and results of those actions). Let us now turn to the next question, that of whether there must be goodness (or not) in actions, by considering four examples.

An artillery battery is separated into two elements, the advance party and the main body, during a unit movement. Part of this particular movement involves a river crossing operation. After the advance party has crossed the river, it comes under attack by enemy forces, and is pinned down. The main body, on the opposite river bank, starts firing in the direct fire mode to suppress the enemy. Sergeant First Class Crees, the Chief of the Firing Battery, leads a group of soldiers across the river in several small boats despite heavy enemy fire. His group, including the attached medic, starts administering first aid to the wounded and evacuating them back across the river. Sergeant Crees discovers that the battery commander is amongst those wounded, and so he

takes charge of the advance party defenses. While organizing this effort, he is wounded twice in the legs by enemy fire. Nevertheless, Sergeant Crees continues his work and eventually the advance party is safely withdrawn to the other side of the river (due to his efforts).

An armored cavalry unit is conducting a reconnaissance mission in Southwest Asia. During that reconnaissance, the unit discovers an enemy prisoner of war camp. The camp is holding approximately one hundred prisoners but appears to have only twenty guards. The guards are armed only with rifles and light machine guns.

The armor commander, Captain Zanol, decides against notifying his higher headquarters and instead conducts an attack on the camp. He directs his tanks to attack from behind the camp while his armored personnel carriers move in from the front and the flanks. Without warning, the tanks crash through the camp fence and shoot high explosive rounds into the guard house and machine gun the guard towers. The panicked enemy guards immediately surrender. The prisoner of war camp is taken and all the prisoners are liberated due to the quick thinking (and efforts) of Captain Zanol.

Lieutenant Alexander is a U.S. F-16 pilot on a routine support mission over war-torn Libya. During his

mission, he is notified that Libyan President Momar Khadafi has been identified as a passenger on a plane flying near his location. The plane, however, is guarded by four F-7 fighters. He volunteers to attempt to shoot down the plane, which in turn, might bring an end to the war. Soon he picks up the plane and its escorts on his radar. Two of the F-7s break off and move towards his position. One F-7 fires a heat-seeking missile but Lieutenant Alexander fires off some chaff which distracts the missile. He fires two Sidewinder missiles at the enemy, both of which hit their targets, destroying the aircraft. Lieutenant Alexander moves carefully to engage the other aircraft. The F-7s fire missiles at the F-16 but are ineffective due to defensive measures. Flying in from underneath their position, Lieutenant Alexander fires two more missiles at the Libyan aircraft. One missile makes contact, disabling one F-7, while the other F-7 leaves the area, abandoning his leader. Lieutenant Alexander engages the passenger plane with his cannon and shoots it down.

Chief Petty Officer Evans is the commander of a small patrol boat off the coast of a Caribbean island. He has discovered there is a drug dealer operating a fleet of boats near the island. His orders are to ignore the drug dealer and concentrate on sighting enemy

submarines. Chief Evans and his crew are interested in the drug dealer, however, and find out his drug factory is located on a secluded dock. Early one morning, Chief Evan's patrol boat moves to the secluded dock and attacks the factory. While his crew engages the drug dealers with their deck cannon, Chief Evans swims underwater beneath the dock. He surprises two of the gunmen from behind, killing them with his pistol, and charges the factory. He kicks the door in, shoots another three drug dealers, including the chief dealer. As his crew joins him in the factory, Chief Evans forces open the office safe. Inside the safe are ten million dollars in cash and ten pounds of cocaine. Chief Evans and his crew take the contraband (keeping it for themselves). They set fire to the factory and depart the dock on their patrol boat.

Some interpreters, including Walton, would argue that the first three cases were all examples of courageous acts but not the last case. The efforts at rescue, in both the first and second cases, certainly had good purpose. The effort in the third case, of shooting down the aircraft, was directed to ending the war, also a noble purpose. It is impossible, however, according to Walton and others, for Chief Evans' action to be called courageous (because it lacked "good intentions" or "good

results").⁸⁶ He (and his crew) sought only private gain.

There is no moral worth in this case, despite the fact it involved the common elements (of courage), and thus it is not a courageous act.

Once again, I have to argue against such a position.

In all of the cases, including Chief Evans', we have the common elements of courage. These elements form the basic criterion for recognition of courageous acts (in the military). The complicating factor in Chief Evans case is his taking and keeping of contraband.

This action, based solely upon greedy intentions, is something we have a difficult time accepting as being "moral" or "good". We, in effect, evaluate and judge Evans' intention as "bad" and by doing so, color our perception of the courageous act.

Perhaps a better perspective on Evans action can be achieved by transference. By transference, I mean, given a totally different situation, requiring courageous acts, would you (as a military leader) want Chief Evans to be on your side? If an attack were to be made on an enemy submarine base, would you want Chief Evans on the assaulting force? I believe the evidence, while maybe circumstantial (like his keeping calm under fire and attacking the drug dealers in an aggressive manner), suggests a positive response. Such a response, in turn,

raises questions about Walton's value infusion in the concept of courage.

Finally, we turn to the third case concerning whether we must have a "good" soldier and a "good" purpose in order to have a courageous act. Based upon my earlier arguments, it should be obvious that I do not subscribe to this belief. I have already said that courageous acts can involve either a "good" or a "bad" soldier. Whether we have Sergeant Green or Corporal Turck is not relevant. Also I have argued that neither a "good" purpose nor a "bad" purpose matters. Either one, that of Sergeant Creech or Chief Evans, is sufficient for a courageous act. Therefore, while it is certainly possible for a "good" soldier and a "good" purpose to be involved in a courageous act, those "good" elements are not required.

What remains to be discussed is the opposing view, whether a "bad" soldier and a "bad" purpose can result in a courageous act? To cite an old example, we are talking about the courageous villain again.

A first look at this question could lead us to believe, that like the "good soldier-good purpose", a "bad soldier-bad purpose" argument is just as valid. But there is something inherent in the term courage which precludes us from calling a villain's act courageous.

Perhaps it is because courage has a positive connotation.

When someone says "it certainly was a courageous thing to do", the implication is that a "good" thing has occurred. Not an "average" or "bad" thing, but a "good" thing.

Or the positive connection to courage may be through it being considered a virtue. Virtues, from Aristotle to MacIntyre, are considered as commendable or complimentary. Furthermore, some virtues, including courage, often fall into a special grouping (i.e., cardinal virtues) and might be considered "more" praiseworthy (than other virtues).

It is because of this positive connotation that some interpreters have a difficult time with the "bad" man and "bad" purpose case. A classic example might be the Nazi soldier in the Second World War. Suppose this soldier performs a courageous act, like holding off an enemy (American) attack of a concentration camp. Despite the fact that his action might be the equivalent to one conducted by an American soldier, some writers wouldn't consider it courageous. The question they would raise is, how can we have an immoral man (the Nazi with his racist beliefs) and an immoral act (defending a camp where illegal executions are conducted) resulting in a courageous act?

My argument is that morality does not have a part in courageous acts (in military contexts). I base my argument on the military's recognition of two distinctive types of awards: 1) heroism and 2) achievement. While achievement awards may (and usually do) consider the morality (or character) of a soldier, awards of heroism are simply based upon the act itself. Men of both "good" and "bad" character are recognized as courageous within the military. A soldier's performance, either prior to or after, the courageous act doesn't matter. In the case of Seaman Tiggs, nobody would suggest we reconsider recognizing his courageousness because of his previous lackluster record. Nor do we revoke awards because of a soldier's moral life after his act. The fact that Ira Hayes (a marine who was decorated for courage on Iwo Jima in the Second World War) died an unemployed, alcoholic doesn't diminish his courageous acts at all.

Therefore, we can say the notion of moral worth or good, while not detrimental, is not a requirement for courageous acts in military contexts.

The final dimension we need to discuss concerns whether courage involves rationality or not? Here we focus on the relative mental state of the soldier who performs a courageous act. Is the soldier sane or insane? Is his method logical or illogical? Are his

actions rational or irrational?

Let us consider the case of Private MacDonald, a young soldier assigned to an air defense battalion in the Panama Canal Zone. He is a high school graduate, has an Intelligence Quotient (IQ) score of 100, and recently scored 60 (a passing score) on his Military Skill Qualification (SQT) test. He likes baseball, beer, and girls. His prize possession is a late model Chevy Camaro. He is, by all measures, an average and rational soldier.

One night while on guard duty, Private MacDonald's post comes under heavy machine gun fire. He and Private Roberts, another guard, dive behind a pile of rocks. Private MacDonald radios for help and then notices that Private Roberts is seriously wounded. The nearest first-aid kit is in the guard house, about twenty-five meters away. Private MacDonald fires a few rounds from his M16 rifle at the sound of the machine gun fire but the enemy fire continues to be heavy. Private Roberts is in excessive pain despite a makeshift bandage Private MacDonald applied. MacDonald jumps up from his position, firing his rifle from the hip, and runs to the guard house. Two other guards arrive at the position but are soon wounded also. Under continuing enemy fire, Private MacDonald crawls to the two other guards and drags them,

one at a time, to the guard house. After checking the condition of their wounds, he runs back to Private Roberts' position. He applies first aid to the wounded man and carries him back, still under fire, to the guard house. Soon reinforcements arrive and drive off the enemy attackers.

Now consider the case of Sergeant Fleming, a former missile crew chief, now assigned to the mental ward of a military hospital in West Germany. Sergeant Fleming has suffered a nervous breakdown and has further been diagnosed as a manic-depressive. Previously, he had been an excellent soldier and husband.

Early one morning a group of terrorists, driving a bus, crash through the front gate of the base where the hospital is located. They quickly seize the hospital and take all the patients, including Sergeant Fleming, hostage. After two days of stalled negotiations with U.S. and German officials, the terrorists threaten to kill all the hostages. Sergeant Fleming is quiet, sullen, and depressed during this time. Then as he is being moved under armed guard to the cafeteria for a meal, Sergeant Fleming goes berserk. He disarms his guard, shoots him, and attacks three other terrorists. After killing them, he runs up to the hospital director's office, where the terrorists have established a command

post, and kicks in the door. He leaps across the room, shoots two more terrorists, and grabs the terrorist leader. With his bare hands, he kills him, and continues on his rampage, ultimately killing all but two of the terrorists.

Finally consider the case of Private Kominski. Private Kominski is an ammunition handler for an ordnance company in the war in South Korea. He is not an intelligent soldier, being a sixth grade drop-out, and classified as a CAT IV (Cat IV standing for the lowest level measured by military entrance tests). He is, however, big, brawny, and the strongest man in the company. He can lift two 203mm shells, a total of four hundred pounds, at once.

While conducting rearming operations for an infantry battalion, Kominski's unit comes under attack. The soldiers return fire and a long battle ensues. A group of enemy soldiers, with a light machine gun, is located approximately sixty meters from Kominski's position. Corporal Richards, who is with Kominski, tries again and again to hit the enemy machine gun but without luck. Finally in desperation, Corporal Richards throws a hand grenade at the position. It falls short by thirty meters. Private Kominski, who has been watching Corporal Richards every move, decides to imitate his act. He

picks up a grenade, pulls the pin, and tosses the grenade at the machine gun nest. Due to his strength, the grenade lands in the middle of the enemy and explodes, killing all.

Are all three of these cases equivalent? At first glance, they appear to be, since they all involve a dangerous environment and a sense of overcoming. The key difference, however, is found in the third common element, awareness. Awareness, as will be recalled, involves an understanding of both the dangerous environment and the risks associated with that environment. Implied in such an understanding is a knowledge of logic (or critical reasoning) and the ability to apply that knowledge to a given situation.

In our examples, we have three different levels of awareness (and logical ability) including: 1) the rational, 2) the ill-rational, and 3) the non-rational.⁸⁶

The rational level is represented in the first case by Private MacDonald. Private MacDonald understands the elements of critical reasoning and applies them (adequately) during his courageous act.

In the next case, Sergeant Fleming, we have a representative of the ill-rational level. At one time Sergeant Fleming was rational (with the ability to understand and apply logic) but now he is not. Nor is he

aware of what he is doing in this case. His lack of awareness, one of the common elements of courage, is critical. When Sergeant Fleming attacks the terrorists, it certainly resembles a courageous act. And yet, like the example of the sleeping man who inadvertently rolls over onto a thrown grenade, we must say it is not a courageous act.

Private Kominski, in the last case, represents the non-rational level. Rather than a temporary condition, like Sergeant Fleming's, the non-rational soldier has a permanent condition. Private Kominski, due to his lack of intelligence, will never be able to understand or apply logic. His action, while having effective results, only looks like a courageous act.

What we can say then, is that courage definitely involves rationality. In fact, due to the connection (logic) between rationality and awareness, we cannot have a courageous act without it.

This, then, completes our discussion of the various elements and dimensions of courage. In the next chapter I will present my conclusions on the concept of courage in military contexts.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION

Having now completed this examination of the concept of courage, I am in a position to provide some answers to the broad question raised in the introduction: What is courage?

I submit that courage, in general, is characterized by four common elements. These elements, it will be recalled, are agreed upon by all interpreters, from Aristotle to Aquinas to Walton. They include:

- (1) a moral agent
- (2) a dangerous environment
- (3) an awareness of the dangerous environment (itself) by the moral agent
- (4) a sense of overcoming

Additionally there are a number of dimensions of courage which are controversial. The dimensions which

appear to characterize courage, in military contexts, include:

- (5) it is purely behavioral (does not refer to emotions)
- (6) it is not concerned with motivations
- (7) it may or may not involve other mental states (like deliberation or calculation)
- (8) it is mostly a property of actions (but may be, in certain cases, dispositional)
- (9) it is only descriptive (not descriptive and evaluative)
- (10) it involves rationality (not ill-rational or non-rational behavior)

The sum of this characterization, as mentioned earlier, is that courage has a special status among virtues valued by the military.

Courage, unlike duty, honor, or loyalty, is something unusual. Courage can not be exercised or accomplished on a daily basis, like other virtues. A soldier does his duty by completing his assigned mission or completing a set of specific tasks. A soldier demonstrates his honor by keeping his word (when he gives it), not cheating, and not stealing. A soldier proves his loyalty by supporting his superiors in public, not questioning decisions (once made), and carrying out his orders in good spirit. But how does a soldier show that he is courageous?

Courage is something inconsistent. Unlike the other virtues, it is not something which results from practice, training, or discipline. We can tell a soldier that duty results from this and that, while loyalty is a product of such and such. And if you violate your honor, x will happen to you. But how do you explain to a soldier how to be courageous?

My suggestion is that courage, rather than being a pendent virtue, may be an autonomous one, at least in regards to the military. It can be viewed as autonomous in several senses. For instance, courage can be either a one-time occurrence or a consistent phenomenon. We can have a soldier who performs a courageous act once and only once, in his life and yet, will always be recognized for that action. Or we can have another soldier who performs repetitive acts of courage and his actions too will be acknowledged.

Courage can also be considered autonomous in relation to other virtues. It need not be linked or joined with other virtues as suggested by the Greek philosophers. We may indeed have a soldier who embodies all the martial virtues. He is dedicated, responsible, loyal, disciplined, and honorable. He aggressively charges into battle and performs numerous courageous acts. Likewise, we may have another soldier who

possesses no virtues, an intemperate man. He shirks his duty, is irresponsible, lies, cheats, and steals. But when he is on the battlefield, his actions are just as courageous as those of the virtuous warrior.

Additionally we might construe courage as autonomous in varying combinations of the above: occurrences and virtues. Take, for example, the intemperate soldier who causes the most trouble in peacetime by his undisciplined behavior. Although he may be in the brig (confinement) at the beginning of the war, we may soon find him performing repetitive acts of courage: charging enemy bunkers and carrying out the dangerous missions others refuse.

By considering courage as an autonomous virtue, it may also be easier to understand something of what I've called the military ethos. Ethos in general, it will be recalled, is a term defined as a particular way of living one's life and one's moral motivation or purpose. Intrinsically bound in the notion of an ethos is a specific set of sentiments, values or virtues. This set (of moral rectitudes) provides an orientation or an azimuth upon which a particular group or community can set itself.

The military sets itself apart from other groups by embracing courage as a (or the) central virtue of its

ethos. While other groups, like police forces and fire fighters, may lay claim to courage as a part of their desired ethos, it is not a primary or critical virtue for them. For the military, however, courage is indispensable. It has not only a moral significance but also a functional significance.

Ultimately, the purpose of a military force is to fight wars; wars against other military forces. Given equally advanced technologies and strategies, the difference between winners and losers will be found quite simply in the force with the greatest courage. History is replete with examples of military forces, in which this quality is more highly developed, defeating forces (even those which outnumber them) in which it is less.

Therefore, paraphrasing General Hackett, while we may indeed hope to meet courage in every walk of life, in the profession of arms it is functionally indispensable. The training, organization, and the whole pattern of life is designed in a deliberate effort to foster it, not just because it is desirable in itself, but because it contributes to a military's efficiency (and effectiveness).⁸⁷

Finally, most of this work has focused on what might be called an internal analysis of courage. By internal analysis, I mean an examination of the various elements

or features which make up (or characterize) the concept itself. Such an analysis could be contrasted with an external analysis, which compares a concept with other (related) concepts (in order to determine meaning). In this case, an external analysis would be found by comparing courage with other (military) concepts like duty, honor, loyalty, or cowardice. One of these concepts, cowardice, has a "special" relationship with courage. Although I have mentioned this relationship before, let me make some further comments.

Cowardice has traditionally been thought of as the antithesis of courage. Starting in ancient Greece, particularly in the writings of Aristotle, we find courage and cowardice in opposition. Courage is considered a virtue while cowardice is a vice. Furthermore, cowardice is defined in relationship to courage (and vice versa). A coward is someone without courage (or one without that specific virtue). This dichotomy means a soldier is either one (courageous) or the other (cowardly) but nothing in between. This idea seems to be the prevalent position down through our own times.

Walton offers a different explanation of the relationship between courage and cowardice. Courage is not the contradiction of cowardice; instead courage is

defined as one thing (which in turn, has its own opposite) and cowardice is another thing (which also has an opposite).

A major problem remains, however, in accepting either the traditional definition or Walton's definition, of courage and cowardice. A soldier's acts, in both definitions, are distinguished as being either something courageous or something cowardly. There is no middle ground, if you will.

I suggest that a more adequate definition of the relationship between courage and cowardice might include three elements:

- (1) acts of courage
- (2) acts that are noncourageous or noncowardly
- (3) acts of cowardice

By making such a distinction, it is easier to understand many of the dynamics which occur on the battlefield.

Imagine that we have a squad of five infantry soldiers in a trench near the FEBA (Forward Edge of Battle Area). One soldier stands up, says "let's go", and charges forward. In his rush forward, he attacks two enemy machine gun positions and an enemy rocket launcher.

He kills several enemy soldiers, destroys the rocket launcher, and captures an enemy officer.

When the first soldier stands up and says charge, a second soldier throws down his rifle, climbs out of the trench, and hides in some nearby woods. As he runs away, he cries out "No, no, I might get shot or killed . . . help, help me!".

Meanwhile, the other three soldiers stay in the trench. They neither charge forward nor run away. When the first soldier rushes forward, they provide covering fire for him, but when the second soldier runs away, they ignore him.

It appears quite easy to classify the acts of the first two soldiers. The acts of the first soldier, the one who charges the enemy, would be termed courageous while those of the second soldier, the one who runs away, would be called cowardly. Both Aristotle and Walton would agree to such classifications. But what of the acts of the other three soldiers? What would we call them? Were they acts of courage? Were they acts of cowardice?

The problem posed by the three soldiers in the trench is not one of action (charging or running away) or inaction (not doing anything) but rather, one of limited action. If they had charged forward, we could call that

action courage. If they had run away or even done nothing, we could call that cowardice. But by their doing something, providing covering fire, their acts fall into a nebulous third classification. Unfortunately, neither Aristotle's nor Walton's definitions make allowance for such a third area.

I submit the actions of the three soldiers are not courageous nor are they cowardly. Instead, they fall into that middle classification: acts that are noncourageous or noncowardly. They are acts which typify those of most soldiers. Nothing heroic, nothing shameful, but something which contributes to the continuity of battle.

ENDNOTES

INTRODUCTION

1. Vagts, A History of Militarism, 35, Huntington, The Soldier and the State, 60, and Hackett, The Profession of Arms, 30, respectively.

2. Angeles, Dictionary of Philosophy, 1981 ed., s.v. "ethos."

3. Huntington, 8-10. This is minor modification of Huntington's conditions of a profession; expertise, responsibility, and corporateness.

4. Hamilton, Madison, and Jay, The Federalist Papers, 66-69.

5. Keegan, The Mask of Command, 350-1. Keegan's assertion is the (contemporary) nuclear age has brought with it a need for a new (post-heroic) soldier's creed; one without courage. I disagree with this notion.

CHAPTER I

6. Sharp and Dunnigan, The Congressional Medal of Honor, 19. This work is a fascinating collection of all U.S. military Congressional Medal of Honor citations.

7. Ibid., 26.

8. Ibid., 43-44.

9. Roget's College Thesaurus, 1985 ed., s.v. "courage."

10. Shalit, The Psychology of Conflict and Combat, 97. While addressing combat as a whole, Shalit's book has a interesting chapter on courage. In brief, he views courage as a psychological state or condition.

11. Webster's Unabridged Dictionary, 1983 ed., s.v. "courage."

12. English and English, A Comprehensive Dictionary of Psychological and Psychoanalytical Terms, 1958 ed., s.v. "courage."

13. Angeles, s.v. "courage."

14. Reese, Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion, 1980 ed., s.v. "courage."

15. U.S. Department of the Army, Headquarters, Military Leadership, Field Manual 22-100 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1983), 90. It is interesting how little literature on courage is found in today's military establishment. The most extensive discussions are found in this work and the others I cite here.

CHAPTER II

16. Angeles, 51.

17. Heintz, Dictionary of Military & Naval Quotations, 70. Heintz has a sizable collection of quotations on courage and related terms.

18. Plato, Laches, 134-138. Plato discusses the concept of courage in other dialogues, particularly the Republic (429-430), but in relation to something else, like myth or the state.

19. Walton, Courage: A Philosophical Investigation, 58. Walton's excellent book is the only contemporary work which examines the concept of courage in depth. It served as a impetus to my own research and thought.

20. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics, 73. The classic

source of any discussion of courage and more so than Plato, a good starting point.

21. Ibid., 33-36.

22. Ibid., 49-50,70. Aristotle also believes in the unity of virtues (but in order to have "complete" virtue).

23. Ibid., 53-65

24. Hastings, Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics, 206.

25. Cicero, De Officiis, 65. Surprisingly, Cicero gets little recognition from later interpreters, even the usually thorough Walton. His distinction between moral and physical courage is still used in today's military forces.

26. Ibid., 69.

27. Ibid., 69,81.

28. Ibid.

29. Ibid., 81.

30. Aquinas, Summa Theologica, 3:1702. Another classic source for discussions of courage.

31. Ibid., 1703-4.

32. Ibid., 1704.

33. Ibid.

34. Walton, 64.

35. Copleston, A History of Philosophy, 4:144.

36. Ibid., 242.

37. Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, 573.

38. Mendal, Ethical Theories, 174.

39. Kant, Grounding for the Metaphysics of Morals,
7. Some, including Walton, attribute the lack of a

continuing interest in courage to Kant. His deontological system leaves little room for acts "above and beyond" the call of duty.

40. Walton, 180-1.

41. Ibid., 34-5.

42. Ibid., 39-40.

43. Foot, Virtues and Vices, 1.

CHAPTER III

44. von Wright, The Varieties of Goodness, 145-7.

45. Walton, 65.

46. Geach, The Virtues, 150.

47. Ibid., 150,160.

48. Foot, 10. Foot's short essay is helpful for bridging the gap between ancient and modern interpretations of courage.

49. Ibid.

50. Ibid., 12.

51. Ibid., 16.

52. Ibid., 16-7.

53. MacIntyre, After Virtue, 123. The heroic society that MacIntyre describes might easily be accepted by many in today's military; many officers think of the military as a heroic society (perhaps the last one).

54. Ibid., 124.

55. Ibid., 125.

56. Ibid., 192. Although his definition of courage is not particularly helpful, MacIntyre's relating of courage to death is insightful.

57. Wallace, Virtues and Vices, 15,61.

58. Ibid., 65.

59. Ibid., 60-61.

60. Ibid., 78,81.

61. Walton, 68.

62. Ibid., 86.

63. Ibid., 86-89. Some readers might suggest Walton's ethical matrix (specifically E1) allows the courageous villain (through the use of a "personal" belief that B is highly worth bringing about; a thief personally believes it is worth his stealing the diamond ring)). Actually Walton later clarifies his position by 1) requiring the agent "justifiably" believe his act have "good" results or benefits (in relation to "high personal standards" and a "ideal of conduct") and 2) the act be "intrinsically good" (to be truly courageous).

64. Sharp and Dunnigan, 246.

65. Walton, 89.

66. Ibid.

67. Aristotle, 73.

68. Walton, 93-94.

CHAPTER IV

69. Keegan, The Face of Battle, 207. Extremely helpful in understanding the dynamics of the historic battlefield.

70. Netanyahu, Self-Portrait of a Hero, 287-91. An excellent journal of a modern warrior.

71. Walton, 159-160. Walton uses the phrase "practical inference" to describe these actions.

72. Hasting, Yoni: Hero of Entebbe, 219-224.

73. Sharp and Dunnigan, 480.
74. Ibid., 22.
75. Ibid., 484.
76. Walton, 197.
77. U.S. Department of the Army, Headquarters, Evaluation Reports, Army Regulation 623-105 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1988), 3.
78. U.S. Department of the Army, Headquarters, US Army Officer Evaluation Report, DA Form 67-8 (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1985).
79. Crocker, The Army Officer's Guide, 379.
80. U.S. Department of the Army, Headquarters, Leadership Development Program Values (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1984), 3-3.
81. Walton, 197-8.
82. Ibid.
83. Moran, The Anatomy of Courage, 27-8. The first contemporary book on courage in military contexts. It emphasizes the psychological dimension.
84. Davis, Marine: The Life of Chesty Puller, 1. Another excellent book on a modern warrior.
85. Sharp and Dunnigan, 549, 556.
86. Fotion, Nicholas, Interview with author, Atlanta, Georgia, 18 January 1989.
87. Huntington, 30.

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